

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

SECSTATE WASHDC 7123

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 1127

PASS LABOR DEPT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ELAB, JO, IS, SY

SUBJECT: ALLEGED SYRIAN-JORDANIAN TRADE UNION COOPERATION

REF: AMMAN 885, TEL AVIV 1363

1. TRADE UNION COORDINATION ITEM IN JORDAN-SYRIA
HIGHER COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF FEB 18 WHICH WAS CITED
REFTELS WAS INCORRECTLY TRANSLATED BY FBIS TO EFFECT
THAT "TRADE UNIONS" WOULD COORDINATE ACTIVITIES, ETC.
WE HAVE SINCE LEARNED THAT CORRECT TRANSLATION
SHOULD HAVE READ "PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION,"
CONSIDERABLY REDUCING POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ITEM.
LEADERSHIP OF LOCAL PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS
(PARTICULARLY MEDICAL AND LEGAL) HAS TRADITIONALLY
BEEN LINKED WITH MORE RADICAL AND/OR BA'ATHIST
ELEMENTS IN JORDAN AND SYRIA; NAMES OF ASSOCIATION
HEADS OFTEN APPEAR IN NEWSPAPER LISTS OF NOTABLES
SPONSORING PRO-PALESTINIAN DECLARATIONS OR
PARTICIPATING IN DAMASCUS-BASED PLO GENERAL COUNCIL
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MEETINGS. MENTION IN FEB 18 COMMUNIQUE OF COORDINATION
OF TWO COUNTRIES' PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS WAS THUS

PRO FORMA NOD IN DIRECTION OF ALREADY-EXISTING
COOPERATION.

2. TEL AVIV REFTEL NEVERTHELESS RAISES QUESTIONS OF
POSSIBLE GOJ USE OF JFTU (GFJTU) BRANCHES ON WEST
BANK FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. IN THAT CONNECTION,
WE WOULD POINT OUT FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE THAT SOME
EAST BANK JFTU AFFILIATES, HOWEVER SUPERFICIALLY
MALLEABLE, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT REPRESENT
THORN IN SIDE OF GOJ. GOJ RECENTLY SAW FIT, FOR
EXAMPLE, TO REORGANIZE JFTU MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE IN
A WAY WHICH ELIMINATED FIVE LEFTIST-ORIENTED UNIONS.
GOJ TENDS TO REGARD UNIONIZATION AS UNWELCOME
CONCESSION TO ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND UNIONS THEMSELVES
AS VAGUELY SUBVERSIVE. ALTHOUGH GOVERNMENT
MANAGES OCCASIONALLY TO COAX FROM AMMAN JFTU TEPID
PROTEST AGAINST ISRAELI "REPRESSION" ON WEST BANK,
DOUBTFUL IF ITS AUTHORITY EXTENDS AS MUCH TO WEST
BANK BRANCHES. MORE LIKELY, IN FACT, THAT PLO
SYMPATHIZERS MIGHT USE WEST BANK JFTU BRANCHES FOR
POLITICAL PURPOSES THAN COULD AMMAN.

3. WE WOULD NOTE THAT PRO-PLO RUMP GROUP
EXILED FROM JORDAN IN EARLY 1970S AND NOW BASED IN
DAMASCUS PURPORTS TO BE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE
OF JFTU IN INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF ARAB
TRADE UNIONS (ICATU) FROM WHICH JORDAN WAS EXPELLED.
RUMP GROUP'S SYRIAN HOSTS, ALONG WITH COMPANY SUCH
AS SOUTH YEMEN AND LIBYA, REMAIN ON RECORD AS
SUPPORTING THIS POSITION. MENTION OF JORDANIAN-SYRIAN
TRADE UNION COORDINATION, AS ORIGINALLY TRANSLATED
(BUT WHICH DID NOT OCCUR), WOULD THUS HAVE REPRESENTED
SIGNIFICANT MANIFESTATION OF BROTHERLY SPIRIT LONG
SOUGHT BY JORDAN AND AT EXPENSE OF PLO.
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